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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 001429

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/SINGH/PASCUAL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/04/2018  
TAGS: [KWBG](#) [PBTS](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [IS](#) [ASEC](#)  
SUBJECT: SURGE IN SETTLER VIOLENCE DIRECTED AT PALESTINIANS

REF: A. JERUSALEM 1368  
[B](#). JERUSALEM 1165  
[C](#). JERUSALEM 1055  
[D](#). JERUSALEM 1004

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Across the West Bank this summer, settler groups have clashed with the IDF, Palestinians, Bedouins, and Israeli and international peace activists. Post has heard eyewitness accounts of projectiles fired at Nablus area villages, beatings of Palestinians near Hebron, and torched agricultural land, slashed tires, stone throwing, poisoned wells and general harassment by settlers (REF A-D). Settler actions have resulted in several arrests by the Israeli authorities. The following instances are the latest in the upward trend. END SUMMARY

Northern West Bank: Settler-IDF Clashes  
lead to attacks on Palestinians  
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[1](#)2. (C) After the IDF removed a bus from Adei Ad outpost (southeast of Nablus) on July 25, there was a wave of settler violence across the Northern West Bank. According to Palestinian accounts, the settlers set fire to fields, blocked roads, threw rocks, and fired weapons. Press reported that one settler near Yitzhar seized an IDF soldier's weapon and put a knife to his neck. Yitzhar settlement spokesman Yigal Amitai told Poloff there is a "a new policy" of coming in large numbers "from all over" to "oppose the action." During Poloffs' July 28 visit to the neighboring Palestinian village of Burin, villagers confirmed this account of clashes between settlers and the IDF, adding that a settler from nearby Bracha had thrown a molotov cocktail into a villager's home July 27 (REF A).

Brick through a windshield  
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[1](#)3. (C) Press reported August 1 that a Palestinian woman and her daughter were severely injured when a young Yitzhar settler threw a brick through their car windshield. Yitzhar settlement spokesman Amitai confirmed to Poloff August 4 that the suspect was arrested and complained to Poloff that "in the last month there have been 57 instances in which Palestinians threw stones at Israelis that never made the news."

"It's hot and everyone's home"  
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[1](#)4. (C) PASF contacts confirmed reports that settlers from Hebron attacked a Palestinian wedding resulting in a fifteen year old boy falling from a roof and breaking his back on August 3. David Wilder, spokesman for the Hebron settlers, told Poloff August 4 that events began with "an exchange of words" that turned into "a free for all like at a baseball

game" and "a kid fell off a roof." He insisted that "there are no rooftops where you find both Israelis and Palestinians," rejecting the accusation that settlers had pushed the boy. "It's summertime here - it's hot and everyone's home - so the fact that things have only gone this far is a good thing," he said. The press also reported July 31 clashes between Hebron area settlers and villages, resulting in slashed tires and broken windows across Hebron's H2 area.

IDF halts escorts, settlers attack  
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15. (C) Yehuda Shaul, Director of the Israeli NGO Breaking the Silence, told Poloff that this summer the IDF has refused to escort Palestinian children to summer camp in At Tuwani (southeast of Hebron) saying they only escort children during the official school year. (Note: Since 2004, IDF troops have escorted Palestinian children from surrounding villages to their school in At Tuwani following repeated instances of violence from settlers at nearby Maon. End note.) Members of the Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT) who escort the children reported that settlers from Maon attacked children going to camp on July 27. (Note: One of the CPT escorts Joel Gullede is an AmCit who was beaten severely with rocks. End Note)

Daniela Weiss: The Instigator  
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16. (C) Some 200 young settlers led by former Qedumim mayor Daniela Weiss began a week-long "Land of Hilltops Trek" on

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July 27. According to press, as they approached the outpost of Maoz Esther next to Kochav Hashachar settlement (east of Ramallah), on July 29, they "fired shots" on nearby Bedouins.

The IDF detained five of the settler hikers. Kochav Hashachar Council Chairman Barry Schuman told Poloff the hikers were "attacked by Bedouins with rocks and sticks," and two boys were injured. Press reported that settlers involved in the incident were restricted to their home settlements for thirty days.

WALLES